

SB 425 -- CORONERS

SPONSOR: Scott (Mayer)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety by a vote of 17 to 0.

This bill makes several changes in the law governing county coroners and their authority to conduct death investigations. The bill requires that when a person dies while being transferred from one county to another county or state and the death could be a homicide, suicide, accident, child fatality, or one that occurred in an unusual or suspicious manner, a death investigation must be conducted by the coroner in the county from which the person was being transferred. The bill clarifies that when a person dies while being transferred from Missouri to another state for medical treatment, the coroner in the county from which the person was transferred (the transferring county) is responsible for investigating the death.

The bill also requires that the coroner in the county in which a transferred person dies (the receiving county) must obtain authorization from the coroner in the transferring county before conducting an investigation. Current law allows both county coroners to investigate the death.

The bill also requires that when a person dies in a medical facility after being transferred, that facility's staff must notify the coroner in the transferring county of the death.

FISCAL NOTE: Cost to General Revenue Fund of Minimal in FY 2004, FY 2005, and FY 2006.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that sometimes when an injured person is transferred by helicopter or ambulance from one county to another (typically from a rural community to a hospital in an urban area), the paperwork in the death investigation can get muddled. The bill solves that problem by clearly establishing which coroner is obligated to conduct the investigation.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Scott; and Missouri Coroners and Medical Examiners Association.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Richard Smreker, Senior Legislative Analyst